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Delcasse had planned. Grey deprecated the use of the phrase, and he never dreamed of the encirclement of Germany. Yet the reconciliation with Russia, like the reconciliation with France, had its price. The greatest empire in the world coveted nothing that it did not possess, yet it might easily be dragged into the quarrels of its new friends, neither of whom was satisfied with the status quo. The one coveted Alsace-Lorraine, the other the control of the Straits. It was also possible that the moves of the Central Powers might force us into closer relations with France and Russia than we intended or desired, and thus almost imperceptibly, transform the association into an alliance in everything but name.

As the Anglo-French treaty had been followed by the first Morocco crisis, so the Anglo-Russian Convention and the Reval visit were followed by a period of acute international strain. The Young Turk revolution provided Austria with an excuse for the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in October, 1908. The provinces had been administered by her ever since the Congress of Berlin in 1878, and no one expected or desired the occupation to cease ; yet the sudden repudiation of Turkish sovereignty was a shock to the world. Iswolsky, it is true, had consented in return for a promise that Aehrenthal would favour the opening of the Straits to Russian warships. This engagement, however, was unknown to the world, and the announcement of the annexation before the Russian Foreign Minister had time to prepare the ground for the attainment of his own aims turned him into a fanatical enemy of the Austrian Foreign Minister. For five months he held out against recognition, and it was only when Germany intervened in March, 1909, with what he called a diplomatic ultimatum, that

he gave way. The relations between Vienna and St. Petersburg never recovered from the strain.

The crisis which kept Europe on the rack for six months ended with the forced recognition by Servia of a change which filled her people with anger and grief. She was much too weak to fight alone, and Russia was still crippled by the Japanese war, but the seeds of future conflict were sown. The Pan-Serb dream of expansion at the expense of Austria, instead of being shattered, took firmer shape, and sooner or later Russia was certain to resume her historic role of patron of the Balkan Slavs. The annexation of Bosnia, so unskillfully carried out by Aehrenthal, though not a crime, was assuredly a blunder, for it exposed the realm of the Hapsburgs to risks and resentments